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Message from the President of the United States, in response to a resolution of the House of Representatives, transmitting a letter from the Secretary of War in reference to the increase of cavalry force upon the frontier of Texas

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INCREASE OF CAVALRY FORCE UPON TEXAS FRONTIER.

MESSAGE

FROM THE

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

IN RESPONSE TO

A resolution of the House of Representatives, transmitting a letter from the Secretary of War in reference to the increase of cavalry force upon the frontier of Texas.

JANUARY 30, 1877.—Referred to the Committee on Military Affairs and ordered to be printed.

To the House of Representatives :

In answer to the resolution of the House of Representatives of the 8th of December last, inquiring "whether any increase in the cavalry force of the Army on the Mexican frontier of Texas has been made, as authorized by act of July 24, 1876; and whether any troops have been removed from the frontier of Texas and from the post of Fort Sill, on the Kiowa and Comanche reservation; and whether, if so, their places have been supplied by other forces," I have the honor to transmit herewith a report received from the Secretary of War.

U. S. GRANT.

EXECUTIVE MANSION, *January 22, 1877.*

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington City, December 15, 1876.

Mr. PRESIDENT: In reply to the House resolution of the 8th instant, asking for information concerning the troops on the Mexican frontier, which resolution was referred to this Department, I present herewith a report by the General of the Army, which contains full information on the subject.

I have the honor to be, with great respect, your obedient servant,
J. D. CAMERON,
Secretary of War.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE UNITED STATES,
Washington, D. C., December 15, 1876.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of the following resolution of the House of Representatives, with your indorsement of the 11th instant, calling for a report:

DECEMBER 8, 1876.

On motion of Mr. Mills,

Resolved, That the President of the United States be requested to inform this House, if not incompatible with the public interests, whether any increase in the cavalry force of the Army on the Mexican and Indian frontier of Texas has been made, as authorized by act of July 24, 1876; and whether any troops have been removed from the frontier of Texas and from the post of Fort Sill, on the Kiowa and Comanche reservation; and whether, if so, their places have been supplied by other forces.

Attest:

GEO. M. ADAMS, *Clerk*.

REPORT.

At the date of the act approved July 24, 1876, there were two regiments of cavalry, the Eighth and Tenth, stationed on the frontiers of Texas, which regiments numbered respectively 785 and 720 men. Not a single cavalry soldier has been drawn from Texas since that date; but, on the contrary, to the Eighth Cavalry have been sent 392 and to the Tenth 202 recruits, and these regiments, according to last reports, contain 1,108 and 892 enlisted men. Recruitment in the artillery and infantry arms of the service has been discontinued, for the very purpose of stimulating that of the cavalry, so as to fill to the maximum (viz, 1,200 enlisted men) the cavalry regiments on the Texas frontier and in the region where war still exists with the Dakota Indians.

At the same date, July 24, 1876, there were stationed on the frontier of Texas the Tenth, Eleventh, Twenty-fourth, and Twenty-fifth Regiments of Infantry, numbering each about 400 men. In the month of August, Lieutenant-General Sheridan, commanding the Division of the Missouri, drew, with my approval and sanction, the Eleventh Infantry from Texas to the Department of Dakota, where their presence was, and still continues to be, an absolute necessity by reason of actual war. There still remains in Texas the Tenth, 472, the Twenty-fourth, 354, and the Twenty-fifth, 403 enlisted men; so that at this time the frontier of Texas is guarded by two regiments of cavalry and three regiments of infantry, numbering, in the aggregate, 3,229 enlisted men and about 110 officers, a larger fraction of the Army of the United States than is allotted to a like extent of frontier anywhere else in the country, except in the region where actual war exists, (Dakota.)

The resolution of inquiry also embraces the post of Fort Sill, on the Kiowa and Comanche reservation, outside of Texas. This post is designed to prevent the Kiowas and Comanches, the hereditary enemies of Texas, from making incursions into Texas, and, therefore, the strength of its garrison has a direct connection with the subject-matter. In July last it was garrisoned by eight companies of the Fourth Cavalry. In August General Sheridan was forced to re-enforce General Crook, then in the field, by seven companies of the Fourth Cavalry, under its colonel, Mackenzie. This regiment, at the time, garrisoned two other places, viz, the Cheyenne agency (Fort Reno) and the new Fort Elliott. Colonel Mackenzie left three of his companies at Fort Sill and two at Fort Reno; and to enable General Pope, the department commander, to garrison these places adequately, twelve companies of artillery were sent him from the Atlantic seaboard, four of which were posted at Fort Sill. Recently a necessity arose to recall eight of these

artillery companies to the Department of the East, and the Twenty-third Infantry, or so much of it as is not actually in the field with General Crook, has been ordered from the Department of the Platte to General Pope, to enable him to keep up the garrisons in the Kiowa, Comanche, and other reservations on the northern border of Texas. This change is now in progress, so that the garrison of Fort Sill is not complete; but its object has been fully attained, for not a single raid has been made this year from that quarter into the State of Texas by the Kiowas, Comanches, Cheyennes, or Arapahoes.

The balance of the Fourth Cavalry stationed in that region has been strengthened by 150 recruits, so that the three companies at Fort Sill number about 300 men.

Believing that the above statement covers the subject of inquiry of December 8, 1876, I am, with great respect, your obedient servant,

W. T. SHERMAN,
General.

Hon. J. D. CAMERON,
Secretary of War, Present.